



Overview

Now in its fifth year, the Wisconsin Film Festival has become the state's premier film event.

A public program of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arts Institute, this four-day international film festival takes place each spring on campus and in downtown Madison. The Festival presents the best new independent film (feature, documentary, experimental), world cinema and new media; cultivates discovery through talks, panels, and discussions with filmmakers; and showcases the work of Wisconsin filmmakers through juried competitions. The Festival is committed to independent film culture, quality programming, community involvement, and a filmmaker-friendly environment.

2002 4th Annual

Dates: April 4–7

Films: 138 features, shorts, documentaries and experimental films

Talks: A dozen panels and talks, plus Q & A sessions with more than 60 filmmakers and speakers

Venues: Six theaters, seven screens

Attendance: 18,500

"The fourth annual Wisconsin Film Festival . . . will be remembered as a critical and box-office blockbuster."—Tom Alesia, *Wisconsin State Journal*.

The Wisconsin Film Festival continued to grow in 2002, adding a venue (the Bartell Theatre) and increasing programming by 30 films and attendance by 30%. The international lineup included films from 20 countries such as Israel, Iran, Afghanistan and Palestine, numerous Wisconsin and Midwest premieres, and a showcase of films by regional makers. The Festival was one of only fourteen nationwide to receive a grant from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences.

Highlights included the Midwest premiere of "Thirteen Conversations About One Thing" (Sony Pictures Classics), written and directed by Jill Sprecher and her sister Karen Sprecher (Madison natives and UW-Madison alumni); the Wisconsin Premiere of "Big Bad Love" (IFC Films) with star and producer Debra Winger and director Arliss Howard appearing in person; a tribute to Israeli director Amos Gitai; a showcase of new cinema from Quebec; world cinema including "Promises" (Cowboy Pictures), an Oscar-nominated documentary about the Mideast conflict; and the Midwest premieres of the acclaimed Inuit film "The Fast Runner" (Lot 47 Films) and Milwaukee filmmaker Chris Smith's latest documentary, "Home Movie" (Cowboy Pictures). Panels included "Independent Distribution," featuring speakers such as Jeff Lipsky of Lot 47 and John Vanco of Cowboy Pictures.

Also featured was work by more than 50 established and emerging filmmakers with Wisconsin ties, including "E-Day!", a comedy short starring Chevy Chase by Scott Dikkers (former editor-in-chief of The Onion); "Mexicanidad," a video history of Mexican mural art by Milwaukee filmmaker Dan Banda; films by acclaimed experimental filmmaker Scott Stark (including his 2002 Whitney Biennial selection "Angel Beach"); "No Sleep 'til Madison," an ensemble comedy by Peter Rudy, Erik Moe, David Fleer, and Ivo Knezevic; and the documentary "Man Hunt," about three single women in pursuit of Mr. Right (filmmakers include Wisconsin's Matt Rader).

"Of course, the proof of a festival's pudding is in the strength of its programming, and Wisconsin's lineup year after year stands tall even in comparison to that of Chicago, its most notable local competitor."—Chris Sieving, *PopMatters.com*.

2003 5th Annual

Madison, Thursday, March 27 - Sunday, March 30

(UW Campus) Cinematheque, Memorial Union Play Circle

(Downtown Madison) Madison Art Center, Orpheum and Bartell Theatres, Club Majestic

Contact

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Submissions

Deadline: Dec. 20, 2002 (Student Competition: Jan. 24, 2003). See website for details.



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www.news.wisc.edu/newsphotos/filmfest2003.html

2003 Wisconsin Film Festival (Madison, March 27 - 30)

PREVIEW OF FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

Films from around the world. Films from around the block. Films far from the familiar.

MADISON—The Wisconsin Film Festival, a public program of the UW-Madison Arts Institute, is slated for Thursday, March 27 through Sunday, March 30, 2003. Over four days, the Festival will feature over 100 fresh and original independent feature films, documentaries, world cinema, experimental films, and the work of Wisconsin filmmakers. Downtown Madison venues include the Orpheum Theatre, the Bartell Theatre (formerly the Esquire), the soon-to-be opened Club Majestic, and the Madison Art Center. UW-Madison campus-area venues will include University Square Theatre, the Memorial Union Play Circle and the UW Cinematheque. The full schedule will be announced February 26; advance ticket sales begin February 27. For information and to sign up on the mailing list, visit www.wifilmfest.org or call (877) 963-FILM.

Festival highlights will include premieres of acclaimed films such as "Better Luck Tomorrow," "Amandla! A Revolution In Four-Part Harmony," "The Trials of Henry Kissinger" and "Satin Rouge;" a selection of new African films, from Tunisia to Senegal, Rwanda, the Ivory Coast and beyond; programs that explore the sciences in film and culture; a special focus on experimental cinema, keyed by a visit from influential avant-garde filmmaker Michael Snow; our annual showcase of "Wisconsin's Own" filmmakers, and much more.

Now in its fifth year, the Wisconsin Film Festival has quickly grown to be the region's premier independent and specialty film event. In 2002, the Festival presented more than 130 films from 20 countries plus a dozen talks and panels, and featured 60 local and visiting filmmakers and industry professionals. Ticket sales increased by 30% to 18,500. The media have hailed the Festival as a "a critical and box-office blockbuster," "one of the best events of its kind in the Midwest," a "stunning" success, and "a vital forum for community-unifying art." In 2002, Festival Director Mary Carbine was named as one of the Midwest film community's "People of the Year" by the Chicago-based Screen Magazine.

FESTIVAL PROGRAMMING – A PREVIEW OF FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

American Cinema

A highlight of this series of new narrative features from the United States is "Better Luck Tomorrow," filmmaker Justin Lin's stylish and unnerving "amorality tale" of a high school clique of Asian-American overachievers who play on the dark side. "A searing satire of modern suburbia" (Hollywood Reporter).

Documentary

Documentaries from the United States and around the world, including:

"Amandla! A Revolution In Four-Part Harmony." Winner of the Audience Award and Freedom of Expression Award at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival, "Amandla!" tell the story of black South African freedom music in the battle against apartheid through the power of song, with rousing performances by Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, the ANC National Choir and many others.

"The Trials of Henry Kissinger." Inspired by the Christopher Hitchens book, this powerful documentary account of war crimes charges leveled against the former secretary of state has been called "devastating" (Stephen Holden, The New York Times) and "required viewing for every American, especially now" (John Anderson, Newsday).

"L'Chayim, Comrade Stalin." Filmmaker Yale Strom took his camera on a seven-day trip via the Trans Siberian Railroad to explore the history of the first Jewish state, the Jewish Autonomous Region of Siberia, artificially invented by Stalin in 1928 to create an alternative to the religious expression of Judaism and the growing Zionist movement in the USSR. Through interviews with early pioneers in the United State and Russia, Strom creates a vivid portrait of this unique chapter in Soviet and world history.

New African Cinema

Presented in partnership with the UW-Madison African Studies Program, this series features a broad range of films from across the continent and beyond.

A widowed Tunisian seamstress takes an unlikely journey of self-discovery in Raja Amari's sumptuous "Satin Rouge," which features glowing performances, terrific music and exuberant dance numbers. "Exhilarating! The most good-hearted yet sensual entertainment I'm likely to see all year!" (Andrew Sarris, New York Observer).

"Waiting for Happiness" is the latest feature from Abderrahmane Sissako, director of the acclaimed millennium film "Life on Earth." This lyrical, meditative portrait of a young man who visits his mother in a small Mauritanian village before emigrating to Europe was a standout of the recent Cannes and New York Film Festivals.

Winner of the Silver Leopard for best first feature at the 2001 Locarno International Film Festival, Alain Gomis' "L'Afrance" looks at the problems of migration and identity faced by most young Africans in Europe. Set in Paris, the film centers on a young Senegalese student who, his legal residency at an end, is torn between remaining in Paris and his desire to return home.

The searing "100 Days" recreates the struggles of a Tutsi girl and her family to survive the genocide in Rwanda by taking refuge in a church protected by UN forces. Shot in Kibuye church, the site of an actual massacre, "100 Days" features Rwandan actors playing parts that were only too familiar to them. Four Rwandan investors joined producer Eric Kabera, who lost 32 members of his own family to the violence, and director Nick Hughes to make this powerful monument to the Rwandan genocide.

Spotlight: Michael Snow

The influence of Michael Snow on the North American avant-garde film is undeniable. His films explore the definitions and boundaries of the cinema, the capabilities and limits of the camera and the projector, and the perceptual and conceptual capacities of film spectators. As a filmmaker, painter, sculptor, photographer, and musician, Snow has explored the intersections between these media since the 1960s. With the filmmaker present, we will survey a selection of Snow's work, from his seminal 1967 film "Wavelength" to a presentation of his latest explorations in digital media. We will also showcase Snow's new feature film, "*Corpus Callosum*," which Village Voice critic J. Hoberman describes as "a bonanza of wacky sight gags, outlandish color schemes, and corny visual puns that can be appreciated equally as an abstract Frank Tashlin comedy and as a playful recapitulation of the artist's career."

Experimental and New Media

Keynoted by the visit of Michael Snow, this special focus on experimental film includes:

Luis Recoder: "Liminal Lumen." Restoring the power and the magic of the projectionist from the early days of cinema, San Francisco-based filmmaker Luis Recoder re-shapes found footage not through editing but by threading multiple strips of film in the same projector. Mark McElhatten has described the effect on the viewer as "a kind of visual calisthenics playing with our short-term memory sense of déjà vu through antiphonal echoes of sound and image." Recoder's projection performances have been featured at the 2002 Whitney Biennial, and will be featured at this year's Rotterdam Film Festival.

Bill Morrison's "Decasia" explores the deterioration of the film emulsion itself, as he incorporates archival footage that has deteriorated to the point of abstraction. As Morrison describes it, "the artifacts of decay boil characters out of frame, smear the surfaces of shiny new cars, and melt the skin off its subjects." "Who knew that decay itself – artfully marshaled, braided, scored and sustained -- could provoke such transports of sublime reverie amid such pangs of wistful sorrow?" (Lawrence Weschler, The New York Times Magazine).

Wisconsin Film Festival 2003

Preview / Add 4

Filmmaker Pat O'Neill describes "The Decay of Fiction" as an "intersection of fact and hallucination" at the legendary but now abandoned Ambassador Hotel in Hollywood. The hotel inspires a technically virtuosic meditation on cultural and personal memory, as the building and its stories both slowly decay.

Journeys: Films from the New Europe

This annual Festival showcase of contemporary European cinema is presented in partnership with the UW-Madison European Studies Alliance. Highlights of this year's series include Austrian filmmaker Nikolaus Geyrhalter's "Elsewhere." Traveling around the globe and through cultures, "Elsewhere" is a cinematic homage to humanity at the beginning of the 21st century. Shot over a year in twelve remote places on five continents—from Siberia to Micronesia, Sardinia to Namibia—"Elsewhere" takes us on an epic journey through languages, landscapes and sounds.

Science, Film and Culture

As part of a series of documentary and narrative films that broadly address the sciences in film and culture, the Festival welcomes filmmaker Su Friedrich, one of the most respected names working in independent documentary film and the recipient of Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundation fellowships and many other awards.

Her commitment to exploring personal concerns which reflect larger social issues continues with "The Odds of Recovery," described as "a film about six surgeries, one bad hormone problem, a fifteen-year relationship and the onset of middle age." Friedrich documents her journey towards wellness and her interactions with the medical establishment, alternating between personal reflections and footage from examination rooms. Friedrich will be present to discuss the issues raised in her film, and we will also showcase two of her recent films, "Rules of the Road" and "Hide and Seek."

This series is supported by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Continuing Studies, Wisconsin Idea Initiative.

Wisconsin Film Festival 2003

Preview / Add 5

2003 Wisconsin Film Festival sponsors include Planet Propaganda, IMS (Interactive Media Solutions, LLC), Isthmus, 105.5 Triple M, Charter Communications and the Independent Film Channel, i³ [i-cubed], CineFilm Laboratories, the Madison Concourse Hotel & Governor's Club, University Book Store, Wisconsin Film Office, Steep & Brew, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, Eastman Kodak Company, Funnel, Inc., Burne Photo Imaging, and the UW-Madison Anonymous Fund, African Studies Program, European Studies Alliance, Center for Jewish Studies, Kemper K. Knapp Bequest, and Division of Continuing Studies, Wisconsin Idea Initiative.

Venues and Partners include the Orpheum Theatre, Club Majestic, the Madison Art Center, the Bartell Theatre, University Square Theatres, the UW Cinematheque, and the Wisconsin Union Directorate Film Committee.

Additional partners include the Milwaukee Independent Film Society, the Wisconsin Screenwriters Forum, the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, Chicago, and the Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The Wisconsin Film Festival is a public program of the UW-Madison Arts Institute.

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